

25 April 1974

Mr. Edwin A. Thompson
Director, Records Declassification Division
National Archives and Records Service
Seventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20408

Dear Alan:

This is to advise you that on 17 April 1974 the Director of Central Intelligence approved an amendment to "Guidelines for Declassification of Office of Strategic Services Records," transmitted to the Archivist of the United States by DCI letter of 16 May 1973. Paragraph 1, under the heading Detailed Guidance: Named or Identifiable Individuals (pp. 1-2), is affected by the change. Specifically, the Director of Central Intelligence has determined that the identities of OSS non-agent personnel need no longer be protected beyond 30 years merely on the basis of subsequent service with the Central Intelligence Agency, the Central Intelligence Group, or the Strategic Services Unit.

The document authorizing this change is on file in this office. It is not planned to issue a revised version of the "Guidelines" document. This may be done at some future date, however.

It would be appreciated if you would notify Dr. Rhoads of this action. A copy of this letter is enclosed for Mr. Michael Mitchell.

Sincerely,

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[Redacted Signature]

Archivist

STATINTL

✓cc: Mr. Mitchell

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Quite apart from the declassification workload factor, it is questionable whether the policy of protecting the former OSS affiliation of CIA employees is either effective or necessary. The fact that an individual served with the OSS does not, or should not, automatically make him suspect. Of the approximately 20,000 veterans, less than [] wound up with the Agency--and more than half of these are now separated, often in an overt status. Moreover, it is apparent that many Agency employees who served with the OSS have made no effort to conceal that fact when questioned concerning their World War II activities. STATINTL

The effort to conceal the former OSS affiliation of CIA employees by deleting their names from documents may have the opposite effect from that intended. It is entirely possible that the requester's curiosity could be stimulated to the point that he would make a determined effort to discover what had been excised. And he might very well be successful in this endeavor, particularly if, as is often the case, the individual whose name was removed had served as a member of a team and the other team members were identified in the document. A number of avenues are open to an enterprising researcher. He might be able to determine the identity of "X" by contacting other team members, by uncovering references in open literature, or by gaining access to other related OSS records (they "pop up" in university libraries and elsewhere) which enumerate the entire membership of the group. The end result would be that the Agency, in withholding an individual's name in order to protect his current intelligence connections, raised suspicion and increased the risk of exposure.

3. Recommendation: It is recommended that, in the interest of expediting the declassification review of OSS records and in view of the dubious wisdom of the current policy, the OSS declassification guidelines be changed to no longer require the protection of identities of OSS non-agent personnel merely on the basis of subsequent service with the CIA.

HAROLD L. BROWMAN
Deputy Director
for
Management and Services

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CONTINUED

Deputy Director for Operations

APPROVED:

/s/ W. E. Colby

16 APR 1974

DISAPPROVED:

Distribution:

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IGAS:CES:slh
(3 April 1974)

APR 16 1974

9 JAN 1975

Mr. Edwin A. Thompson
Director, Records Declassification Division
National Archives and Records Service
Seventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20408

Dear Alan:

This letter authorizes an expansion of the joint effort of NARS and the CIA to review for declassification those 30-year-old records held by the National Archives which require examination by Agency personnel. If agreeable to you, the expanded program can be implemented immediately.

Central to this expanded effort is the fact that Agency reviewers have been satisfied with the competence and judgment demonstrated by the NARS personnel collocated with Agency supervisors in the review of documents as authorized in my letter of 5 December 1974. In light of this fact, we feel that the requirement for NARS personnel to work on CIA interests only when under the immediate supervision of Agency reviewers can be relaxed to the extent of permitting the 30-year review to be performed by designated NARS personnel whether or not CIA officers are present.

Enclosed is a slightly revised copy of the guidelines to be followed in this new phase of our review. These guidelines will be used by NARS personnel, always subject to CIA spot-checking, after satisfactory on-the-job-training performance under the direct supervision of CIA officers.

We believe that this expansion of the review program can only enhance the possibility of meeting the 31 December 1975 deadline.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

STATINTL

1 - Mr. Thompson
1 - Mr. [Redacted] (2)
1 - Mr. [Redacted] (2)
Enclosure: Revised Guidelines (1 copy)

1 - Mr. [Redacted] (2)

SPECIAL GUIDELINES FOR DECLASSIFYING DOCUMENTS
ORIGINATED BY THE WORLD WAR II PREDECESSOR ORGANIZATIONS
OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

The Director of Central Intelligence exercises exclusive or final original classification authority over all documents originated by the Coordinator of Information (COI), the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and the Strategic Services Unit (SSU). In addition, the Agency must review and clear those documents originated by other agencies which concern CIA's predecessor agencies or intelligence matters of possible current interest to the Agency. In light of the voluminous holdings of OSS documents (hereafter used to include COI and SSU documents as well) in records of those organizations which used the OSS product or otherwise dealt with the OSS, and in light of the limitations of time and manpower available for the 30-year review of World War II materials, this authority is being delegated to a limited degree so that non-CIA personnel can assist in completion of the task. The following special rules shall govern such review:

1. This delegation of declassification authority extends to select reviewers of the Records Declassification Division, NARS, after satisfactory training performance under CIA supervision.

2. All classified documents or other material above described can be declassified, except those which, after review, are determined to contain information of the types in subparagraphs a. through 1. below. Documents falling into the categories listed below must be reviewed by CIA personnel:

a. Information received from a foreign intelligence service through OSS liaison, whether that liaison sourcing is stated or only inferable.

b. Information which discloses the identity of any personnel, including agents and liaison officers, of friendly intelligence or security services.

c. Information concerning communications intelligence, cryptography or related matters.

d. Information which names or effectively reveals the identity of any OSS sensitive source -- human or technical,

actual or planned. Classification will not be removed where any doubt exists. (Note: Captured enemy documents and personnel, refugees and casual informants are not to be considered as sensitive.)

e. Information which reveals the non-official cover (NOC) status of personnel employed by the OSS or the nature of the NOC arrangement, including the NOC name, title, etc.

f. Information which reveals any of the arrangements involved in placing and supporting OSS personnel under official cover with any degree of sensitivity attaching.

g. Information which reveals any aspect of agent spotting, recruitment, development, handling or support, the assignment of tasks, the levying of requirements, and the agent's manner of response and means of reporting or contact.

h. Information disclosing the design and operating characteristics of special devices used or under development by the OSS in support of operations in the field.

i. Information disclosing the manner and degree of financial support given by OSS to foreign organizations and movements, and the means used to obtain and transmit such support.

j. Information which could adversely affect the conduct of present and future U.S. foreign relations.

k. Information which conceivably could place in jeopardy the life of any individual.

l. Letters and memoranda, other than routine transmittal correspondence and acknowledgments.

3. All of the documents exempted from declassification under any of the above provisions of subparagraphs a. through l. will be reviewed by CIA officers. No downgrading to Secret or Confidential is authorized by these guidelines.

4. All documents deemed to qualify for declassification under the guidelines herein provided will be marked with an appropriate stamp to show that declassification action was taken under the terms of this declassification authority.